

Testimony concerning Bill- **HB5034-Banning legacy preference in admissions in all Connecticut colleges**

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My name is Richard Sugarman. I'm the President of Hartford Promise, a scholarship and college success program for Hartford students. We have 480 Promise Scholars attending college right now. We also have 400 future scholars in Hartford high schools. Our Scholars all come from Hartford. 90% are BIPOC, 75% are low income. 70% are first generation college goer's. Throughout their lives our Scholars have had to face so many difficult challenges, but they have endured. They have done everything asked of them and more. They are examples of true perseverance. They are role models. And for all of them the goal/dream has been going to college, getting a degree, and having a better life with social mobility. They work so hard to move out of poverty and have economic mobility. College means everything to them.

But as they approach college, they are hit with another almost invisible but huge barrier that stands in their way. Legacy admissions. They don't even realize that the number of slots available to them is reduced because other applicants who come from privileged legacy families are taking many of the college slots. This practice is completely unfair. It continues the practice of giving kids born on third base an advantage over very hardworking, talented kids who weren't born in the "right" zip code or into the "right" family.

We are supposed to be a meritocracy. Those with the demonstrated merit and hard work get rewarded because of their merit and hard work. Legacy is completely meritless! Colleges lose in this system because they get students who don't deserve and, in many cases, don't want to be there, while not having students who truly deserve and deeply want to be there. Just look at the book by Paul Tough, "The Years that Matter Most...How Colleges Make or Break Us." A major portion of the book features Trinity College and the impact of legacy admissions. Too many students didn't really want to be there or deserve to be there, and it negatively impacted the entire school culture and reputation.

I am in strong favor of **HB5034 – Banning legacy admissions**. Our Scholars are not looking for an advantage. They just want a fair chance to be evaluated on their merit not their family legacy. Let's get back to true meritocracy and give all CT students an equal chance to pursue their college dreams.

Richard Sugarman
President Hartford Promise